



U. S. Department of Justice

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**ALLEGED COLOMBIAN HEROIN DISTRIBUTOR ARRESTED IN CHICAGO;
AMONG 25 CHARGED IN *OPERATION SMACKDOWN* LED BY CUSTOMS AGENTS**

CHICAGO – Twenty-five defendants, including the alleged Colombian-based leader of an international heroin distribution organization who was arrested yesterday in Chicago, along with various alleged couriers and distributors, are facing federal drug-trafficking and/or money laundering charges, U.S. Customs Service and other federal and local law enforcement authorities announced today. The lead defendant, **James Valencia**, a U.S. citizen living in Colombia, allegedly heads a large-scale drug organization that distributes multi-kilogram quantities of heroin in various U.S. cities, including Chicago, New York and Miami, according to a 147-page federal criminal complaint unveiled by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. Valencia, 36, allegedly was in Chicago this month to meet with members of his organization when he was arrested. The Customs Service investigation, known as *Operation Smackdown* and which began last December, resulted yesterday and today in the arrests of 19 of the 25 defendants charged. At the same time, federal agents and local police executed search warrants at seven locations and seized approximately three kilograms of heroin, more than \$90,000 in cash, several guns and 10 automobiles.

Valencia and 22 other defendants, including **Kelly Jones** and **Carlos Jiron**, both of whom allegedly were organizers and leaders of the Chicago area cell of the Valencia organization, and **Jesus Abel Roldan**, who similarly directed the Miami area cell, together with 10 alleged heroin couriers and 9 alleged Chicago-based distributors, were charged with conspiracy to distribute heroin since November 1999. Valencia, Jones, Jiron and three others were charged with participating in separate money laundering conspiracy since June of this year to conceal the proceeds of the alleged heroin-trafficking.

Valencia, Jones and Jiron were among 18 defendants arrested yesterday in Chicago; Roldan was arrested this morning in Miami.

The defendants arrested in Chicago appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Geraldine Soat Brown and 17 of them are being held in federal custody pending further proceedings. Preliminary and detention hearings were scheduled for throughout the day beginning at 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 4, in Federal Court. Arrest warrants were issued for the remaining defendants. A list of the defendants is attached.

“This was one of the most significant Colombian heroin investigations ever conducted by the U.S. Customs Service Chicago office,” said Elissa A. Brown, Special Agent-in-Charge. “Not only did we take down distributors, we now have the alleged organizer and money handlers in custody as well. It doesn’t get any bigger than this,” she said.

“It is rare that law enforcement has the opportunity to arrest the alleged overseas leader of a drug distribution empire in this country, and Customs agents and their partners in this case hit paydirt through their painstaking efforts,” Mr. Fitzgerald said. “We are determined to disrupt

organizations that are responsible for bringing large quantities of drugs into Chicago, as well as the outbound flow of cash, and yesterday's arrest of the leader is an important step," he added.

Mr. Fitzgerald and Ms. Brown announced the charges together with Richard Sanders, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago office of the Drug Enforcement Administration; Thomas J. Kneir, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the FBI; Chicago Police Supt. Terry Hillard; Chief Howard Roseen of the Palos Heights Police Department; and Brian R. Perryman, district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. They commended the police departments in the following suburbs that assisted in the investigation: Des Plaines, East Hazel Crest, Hoffman Estates, Olympia Fields, Palos Hills and Skokie, as well as the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

According to the complaint affidavit, at Valencia's direction, high-level members of his organization coordinated the interstate delivery of large quantities of heroin to Chicago and elsewhere, as well as the delivery of cash proceeds to various wire remitter businesses in Chicago and to members of the organization located outside of Chicago. These high-level members, including Valencia, Jones, Jiron and Roldan, communicated with each other by telephone to coordinate the deliveries of heroin and drug proceeds. They typically sent drug couriers from Chicago to other cities to meet with and receive heroin shipments from members of the organization who were stationed there. The couriers, who often delivered cash proceeds to their co-conspirators in the other cities, picked up the heroin shipment and transported the heroin back to Chicago, usually by car or bus. After the heroin arrived in Chicago, the drugs were typically brought to a "lab," where members of the organization processed and prepared the heroin for further distribution to other members of the conspiracy.

The affidavit describes in detail numerous recorded telephone conversations allegedly involving shipments of heroin to Chicago that occurred between June and September of this year.

The complaint alleges that the following couriers assisted the Valencia organization by transporting wholesale quantities of heroin from other cities to Chicago for distribution to others: **David Acevedo, William Anthony Morciglio, Marcus Jones, Daniel C. Maldonado, Angel George Melendez, Jr., Nathan Thomas, Diana Munoz, Yolanda Rivera, Ruben Chaparro-Ramos, and Iris D. Torres**, who assisted the organization by obtaining the heroin from couriers who had transported it to Chicago and then delivering it to Jiron for further distribution.

The following defendants allegedly participated in the conspiracy by obtaining wholesale quantities of heroin on a regular basis from Jones and/or Jiron for further distribution: **Martha Llanos, Vibencio Consuegra, Shantell Hill, Ricardo Arnold, Miguel Sanchez, Milena P. Pupo**, her husband, **Luis Rivera, Juan Lozada**, and **Sandra P. Velazquez**.

The complaint also alleges that three defendants – Llanos, along with **Cosme Chacon** and his wife, **Viviana Hernandez** – received drug proceeds from members of the organization and laundered the cash through various wire remitter businesses that they operated. Those three, together with Valencia, Jones and Jiron, were charged with money laundering conspiracy. Chacon and Hernandez were not charged with drug-trafficking conspiracy. A search warrant was executed at Chacon and Hernandez' business, located at 1842 Blue Island; as well as at the following locations: 2952 West Montrose; 3827 North Lincoln; 1921 North Monticello, Unit 1; 3005 West Gunnison, Unit 1E; 1433 West Warner, Unit 2; and 4522 North St. Louis, all in Chicago.

Those defendants still being sought were: Morciglio, Thomas, Munoz, Chaparro-Ramos, Consuegra, and Sanchez.

If convicted, the 23 defendants charged in the heroin distribution conspiracy face a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without parole and a maximum fine of \$4 million. The six defendants charged in the money laundering conspiracy face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine, or a fine totaling twice the value of the laundered proceeds. Note, however, that the Court, will determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Tu Pham and Kevin Powers.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

United States v. Valencia, et al., 02 CR 1051

JAMES VALENCIA, also known as “Jota” and “Father,” Colombia	dob	4/25/66
KELLY JONES, aka “Bone” and “Miguel,” 1433 West Warner, Unit 2, Chicago	dob	1/26/78
CARLOS JIRON, aka “Lucho” and “Luis,” 4522 North St. Louis, Chicago	dob	11/2/67
JESUS ABEL ROLDAN, aka “Tomatico” Miami	dob	n/a
DAVID ACEVEDO, 2457 North Kilpatrick, Chicago	dob	5/31/79
WILLIAM ANTHONY MORCIGLIO, aka “Woody,”	dob	n/a
MARCUS JONES, aka “Titty” and “T,” 2543 North Kilpatrick, Chicago	dob	8/9/77
DANIEL C. MALDONADO, 2457 North Kilpatrick, Chicago	dob	1/3/78
ANGEL GEORGE MELENDEZ, JR., 2149 North Austin, Chicago	dob	n/a
NATHAN THOMAS, aka “Edwin Garcia,”	dob	n/a
DIANA MUNOZ,	dob	n/a
YOLANDA RIVERA, 18215 South Kedzie, Homewood	dob	12/7/76
IRIS D. TORRES, 4715 West McLean, Chicago	dob	2/17/56
RUBEN CHAPARRO-RAMOS,	dob	n/a

MARTHA LLANOS, aka “Martica,” “La Mona,” and “Pie Malo,” 6030 North Sheridan, Chicago	dob	2/2/67
VIBENCIO CONSUEGRA, 1921 North Monticello, Chicago	dob	1/13/43
SHANTELL HILL, 1336 Marengo Ave., Forest Park	dob	3/15/72
RICARDO ARNOLD, aka “Ricky” and “Chino,” 1641 North Arnold, Apt. 106, Chicago	dob	2/9/77
MIGUEL SANCHEZ, aka “Mikey,”	dob	n/a
MILENA P. PUPO, aka “Paiza” and “Paisita,” 1625 North Nashville, Chicago	dob	7/28/76
LUIS E. RIVERA, aka “Tito,” 1625 North Nashville, Chicago	dob	12/13/68
JUAN LOZADA, aka “Mono,” “Monito” and “Pablito,” 4915 West Eddy, Chicago	dob	12/27/69
SANDRA P. VELAZQUEZ, aka “La Negra” and “Negrita,” 9301 South Major, Oak Lawn	dob	1/19/74
MARTHA LLANOS, aka “Martica,” “La Mona,” and “Pie Malo,” 4522 North St. Louis, Chicago	dob	2/2/67
COSME CHACON, aka “Meno” and “Nano” 9400 South 69th Ct., Chicago	dob	n/a
VIVIANA HERNANDEZ 9400 South 69th Ct., Chicago	dob	n/a

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